

Inspiration from

Word for the week – volume 2

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Although written for an audience of people at work, the inspiration contained herein is applicable to all areas of the spirit filled Christian life.

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Fire, Fire

Is anyone watching the signs of the times?

It is big news at the present time – parts of the world are on fire? Have you noticed – there seem to be many more significant fires these days. Of course we put that down to human activity and to climate change! But is there a prophetic element?

Looking to scripture we are told there will be many fires before the Day of the Lord – that wonderful day when Jesus returns to reign from Jerusalem. ‘O Lord to you I cry out; for fire has devoured the open pastures, and a flame has burned all the trees of the field.’ ‘For the day of the Lord is coming’ Joel 1:19 and 2:1 (part). And many other references to the outpouring of fire – it is God’s judgement on unrighteousness.

All our works are subject to the test of fire - those done in the flesh burn up like hay and straw, those done in the Spirit come through the fire as precious stones. (1 Corinthians 3:5-17) Again it is the day of the Lord that reveals it. (v 13). Better be prepared as now we can see the day approaching. What are we building?

‘But know this in the last days perilous times will come.’ (2 Timothy 3:1) Paul goes on to explain why this is so. High on the list is the love of self and the love of money.

Many commentators believe that we are close to the end of this age - a perilous time as man becomes worse and worse. Just the time for the light of the righteous to burn brighter than ever. Just the time for our expectation of manifestation of the Spirit and of the gifts of the Spirit to increase and increase - when things become darker the light shows much more clearly.

It is time to look up, to know whom we believe, to feast on the truth so we are not deceived. It is time to live a life that demonstrates the holiness and the goodness of our Lord. Look the fields are white unto harvest - there are still many to come into the Kingdom. Your witness and my witness is a part of God's eternal plan of salvation.

For your review -

Am I building with the right materials?

Does my life speak of Jesus?

Are my business dealings honest and fair?

Am I aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit changing me from one degree of glory to another.

In these days it is more important than ever to seek the Lord for His wisdom in all of life and business.

Adam's ale

English slang (informal speech) for water.

Water - Absolutely essential for life. Perhaps unfortunately we all drink of Adam's Ale - that is we come into this world under the truth that, *'in Adam all die.'* (1 Corinthians 15:22) We come into the world as a living being (v 45) but existing in the realm of death. So we need to be transferred from death to life - *'Most assuredly I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life.'* John 5:24

It is back to water - Jesus said to the Samaritan woman at the well, *'whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.'* John 4:14

Water and word - we know from Ephesians 5:26 that water is used to represent God's word. Here husbands are instructed to look after their wives by washing them with the water of the word. (In this context it is the rhema or spoken word of God.)

Water - absolutely essential for life. My daughter, a qualified nurse, keeps reminding me to drink plenty of water for the good of my physical body. Dehydration causes serious problems even death.

Word – in like manner, are we getting enough of God's word, both written and spoken? It is essential for our health, both physical and spiritual. Dehydration of His word causes serious problems and the fountain that should spring up unto eternal life can be severely reduced.

Adam's ale is the water of this world, the water of the realm of death. It is the water that seeks to *'cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world and not according to Christ.'* Colossians 2:8

Does your life and business run on Adam's Ale or on the living water of God's written and spoken word? How is the fountain that Jesus said would spring up within you? Is it flowing freely or has it become clogged up by worldly thinking?

Be very blessed, and just as my daughter advised me so I pass on the advice – drink lots, both of water and word.

Come and eat

Here is food for thought!

As believers our first meal is the Lord's Supper – usually called communion and taken in the evening which biblically is the beginning of a new day. (See Genesis 1) We take the bread and wine in remembrance of Jesus, His broken body and shed blood that purchases our salvation when we believe and ushers us, born again, into a wonderful New Covenant. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 This is where our Christian life starts.

Our meal at breakfast signifies our restoration into God's purposes by Jesus – just as it did for Peter in John 21. Sometimes we need a late or even an all day breakfast!

Our daily bread is of course Jesus Himself - *'I am the living bread.'* John 6:48. Jesus goes on to say we are to eat His flesh and drink His blood – a difficult concept until we remember that Jesus is the word made flesh. John 1. Eating His flesh and blood is a meaningful way of saying eat, or take in, the word in both its formats - written and spoken by God for our blessing. 2 Timothy 3:16 and Matthew 4:4 Jesus is the living word and when we eat His flesh and drink His blood we are taking in truth. This is also clearly pictured for us in the account of the two men on the road to Emmaus – when Jesus broke bread with them they recognised Him who had been explaining all truth to them on the road.

There is plenty of food for all – no one needs to go short. This wonderful truth is shown for us in the feeding of the large crowds, 5000 + and 4,000+, from just a few loaves and fish. Matthew 14:13-21 and 16: 32-39. Plenty for all who come to recognise Jesus as their personal Saviour.

In the Christian life we are warned to expect tribulation for we have enemies – the world and all the adverse spiritual forces detailed in Ephesians 6: 12. But take heart. The Lord God has prepared a table for us. Psalm 23 tells us that when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death there is a table prepared for us in the very presence of our enemies! So Paul can instruct us to stand and do everything to be able to stand - see Ephesians 6.

Finally we have a wonderful banquet to look forward to - *'Blessed are those invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'* Revelation 19:9. As His bride, of course we are there with Him, our bridegroom. The banquet takes place at midnight – signifying the end of the current age and the start of a new one.

Eat up! Enjoy the fine fare! The banquet may be sooner than we think.

Trade wars

America v China. It goes on and on. The financial world is somewhat concerned. The gold price has increased by 25% - a sign. Gold is looked on as a safe place, so as troubles arise in the marketplace of the world its value increases. Should we be concerned by what is going on?

Concerned as in worried or anxious definitely not! 'Do not worry. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you. Do not worry about tomorrow, sufficient for the day is its own trouble' (from Matthew 6:25-34)

But be alert - we know from scripture that as we get closer and closer to the climax of this age the existing 'Babylonian' way of the world doing things is destroyed. (Revelation 17 and 18)

The strong call to the children of God is to come out of Babylon. (ICCC first Israel conference) Come well away from the world's way of doing things because its destruction is on its way.

Rather like when a big storm is coming we see the winds beginning to strengthen and the waters of the sea become stirred and troubled, now we are seeing the signs of increasing trouble in world's marketplace.

Take heed to your faith. The world is becoming ripe for judgement but we are already judged, found guilty and fully pardoned in the blood of our Saviour Jesus, and filled with the gift of righteousness. So now we do not come into judgement - see John 5:24

However, what we do in this life, our works, will be judged by fire. Everything done the 'Babylonian' way will be devoured like hay and stubble, that done in obedience to the Lord in the Spirit will come through as precious, as gold, as silver. (1 Corinthians 3:12-17)

'Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.' (Philippians 4:6-7)

In these days what we have built in our own strength will not be able to stand (like the valley experience we speak of in TWL) - so we are likely to see some things fail and may suffer loss. But take heart there is a wonderful promise of God especially given for times like these - *'All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.'* Romans 8:28. Another way of saying this is - God will bring good out of every situation for those who love Him.

As we go on and see the world system failing then, as we live by the Spirit, we will rise above the coming storm, the encroaching tide - this is the call of ICC - become a tall tree or a bush full of fruit - be ready and expectant the Lord will use us more and more in these times.

Snakes and ladders

More than a children's game!

As a children's game it is a board with 100 numbered squares arranged in 10 rows of 10. Starting from square 1 roll the dice in turns and move forward the number shown. First to square 100 wins. On the board are ladders - land on the bottom of the ladder and you are whisked up a number of squares depending on the length of the ladder. Land on the head of a snake and you tumble back down the length of the snake. It is a game of chance - no skill involved.

Jacob had a dream, he saw a ladder reaching up to heaven - angels were ascending and descending. (Genesis 28:12.) When Nathanael acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God and King of Israel, Jesus replied, *'you will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of God.'* (John 1:51)

When unbelieving Israel would not go into the promised land through fear and unbelief - they were left wandering in the wilderness for 38 years. (Deuteronomy chapters 1 and 2) In this time the people grumbled against Moses and were then bothered by fiery serpents. They were instructed to make a bronze serpent, lift it up on a pole - when they were bitten by a serpent they were to look at raised bronze serpent and they would recover. (Numbers 21)

Our lives are not a game! However, in life we certainly meet snakes and ladders. Snakes are to be avoided and this is where we need obedience to the scripture because disobedience puts us in the spiritual wilderness until we repent. Even in our obedience our enemy, the chief snake, is plotting against us (Read Ephesians 6) . We need discernment.

The gifts of the Spirit are like ladders - they help us up particularly in a time of need. This is God's grace. Sometimes the Lord does send angels to help us. Sometimes He speaks a specific word - a sword of the Spirit.

In life we look up to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. (Hebrews 12:2) In the course of day to day existence we are to live obedient to the New Covenant, to resist the devil and to seek the Lord's help and provision in a time of need. (1 Peter 5:6-11, Hebrews 4:16.)

In Christ we are all winners because Christ has won the victory and we are in Him. So let's live in that promised land of victory and not suffer through unbelief when problems arise - rather seek the Lord at the throne of grace for His strategy for our difficulty. He has the answer every time!

The King in need of nothing is coming again

'But Jesus did not commit Himself to them because He knew all, and had no need that anyone should testify of man for He knew what was in man.' John 2:24-25

King Jesus knows us inside out. It is a rather daunting thought – that He knows us far better than we know ourselves, and He knows what we think and what we will do. In this scripture Jesus is not going to trust Himself to man. He has no need.

On the contrary He will fulfil the promises He has made regardless of our actions and attitudes – we see that clearly in the way Israel has been restored to existence as a nation.

Jesus expects and wants us to be alert to His promise to return. He expects and wants us to watch – indeed He said to the church in Sardis, *'Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.'* And to Ephesus, *'repent and do the first works or I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand.'* (Revelation 3:3 and 2:5)

The greatest sign of His return is there right before our eyes, *'Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also when you see these things happening, know that the Kingdom of God is near. Assuredly I say to you this generation will not pass away till all things take place.'* Luke 21:29-32

So how does this affect us today and everyday at work and in business? Living by faith has always been very important, now it takes even greater significance – the shorter the time that remains the more important it is to be found doing the works He has prepared beforehand for us to walk in. We don't know whether we have many years or few before Jesus returns to rule His Kingdom from Jerusalem, but either way we want to be found doing the work the Master has commanded.

'Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.' Matthew 24:45-6

So now the challenge – will Jesus find you doing the things He has called you to do should He come quickly?

Calculate the number

This is our Lord's command in Revelation 13:18!

I have never met a Christian with any idea of what it means to calculate a biblical number. And when we do understand another level of the God breathed inspiration of scripture is revealed - it is truly amazing.

So here is an introduction. Every Greek and Hebrew letter represents a number - so you could say the bible is written in both letters and numbers.

Here are two widely understood numbers - 7 represents perfection, particularly spiritual perception (see how many times it appears in Revelation!) 10 represents completeness - that is 'all present and accounted for.' Put them together making 17 which represents 'that which is spiritually perfect and complete.'

Number 9, being the last single digit represents the end. So when we take 17×9 (that which is spiritually perfect and complete at the end) we have 153 - find it in John 21 where 153 fish are taken out of the sea (representing humanity) to Jesus in a net which does not break. The net has a number value of 1224 which 153×8 - 8 being the number of resurrection.

Now some calculating! Turn 17 into a triangular number and you get 153. Triangular? Think of a snooker table with the red balls in a triangle - 5 balls on the base then 4, then 3, then 2 then one on the top - making a triangle of balls 15 in all. Use the same method with 17 balls at the base instead of 5 and you get 153 balls in total.

Now let's turn it into a pyramid number (tetrahedron) making it three dimensional. We are going to need a lot more balls! Each edge will be 17 balls long and the base and each side will contain 153 balls. In order to fill the pyramid we need 969 balls. Find it in Genesis 5:27 - it is the age of Methuselah.

So calculating the number 17 is wonderfully confirming our understanding. That which is spiritually perfect and complete, us the bride of Christ, is taken out of humanity to Jesus before the final judgement. How do we understand that? The name Methuselah means 'when he dies it will be sent.' Immediately after his death the worldwide flood removed all mankind except Noah and family in an act of judgement of a very evil world. (read it all in Genesis 5-8)

The message - the scripture is God breathed and good for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness - we need to submit to it rather than just choosing the bits we like and ignoring the bits we don't.

Inspiration

Gunnar, founder of ICCC, suggested that the word for the week be put into a booklet so that one could refer to it or give it away to others. So now the first 52 I have written are in a booklet 'Inspiration from Word for the week.' It is available as a free downloadable PDF from **www.freebiblebooklets.com** or as a printed booklet from Amazon - type peter michell in the search box under books and it will be there for you to order if required.

Inspiration - 'a sudden brilliant or timely idea or thought' and 'the divine influence which led to the writing of the scriptures.' (*theopneustos* in Greek is literally God breathed.)

Just the thing we need at our every day work, in everyday life - that flash of inspiration - that word of knowledge that comes from the Lord.

As a believer you have received an anointing from the Lord. That is a deposit placed within you that marks you out as one of His, '*the anointing you have received abides in you,*' 1 John 2:27

There is also a place prepared for you, works which the Lord prepared beforehand for each of us to walk in. Ephesians 2:10. That is where the anointing and the inspiration will flow together to maximum effect.

Sometimes we need to lift up our eyes to see - '*My help comes from the Lord.*' Psalm 121:1

This is the message. We are co workers with the Lord. We are not alone, we are not expected to strive and struggle to fulfil God's purpose on earth. We are expected to trust Him who has saved us – the one who has raised us up. *'You O Lord are a shield for me, my glory and the one who lifts up my head.'* Psalm 3:3 and to go with the flow as the Spirit leads.

We can speak to ourselves – be lifted up my soul, with thanksgiving, praise and worship, honour Your Lord, be lifted up my soul. Be expectant my soul, my Lord is for me not against me. He is the one who loves me and wants to communicate with me to bless me and lead me in His purposes.

Inspiration will flow into and over me as I walk in the anointed place and as I rest from my own effort, relying on His leading and guidance. This is the walk the Lord desires, where our objectives become an outward manifestation of an inward walk of faith – faith comes by hearing – it comes back to divine inspiration!

Are you working with inspiration rather than perspiration? Be inspired.

Coming – ready or not

Most of us will have played hide and seek as children. One person closes their eyes and counts to 20 or 30 whilst the others hide. Then, when time is up he or she opens their eyes and calls out, 'Coming – ready or not,' and starts to search for the others.

Ready or not? Are we ready for the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whether it be soon or later.

His instruction is to watch for we do not know the time of His coming. Matthew 24:42, Revelation 3:3.

What does it mean to be ready?

In the parable of the 10 virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) 5 were deemed ready and 5 were not. Here ready meant they had oil (representing the Holy Spirit) in their lamps – carrying the meaning of being born again. They were ready, those with no oil were not.

In the parable of the Minas (Luke 19:11-27) the instruction was, '*Do business till I come.*' In the parable of the faithful and unfaithful servants (Matthew 24:45-51) the faithful servant is doing his masters work right up to the masters return whilst the unfaithful one is eating and drinking with the drunkards.

So, whilst we are '*looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ,*' (Titus 2:13) we press on faithfully with the works He has prepared for us (Ephesians 2:10) until He comes, whether sooner or later.

Of course, we work with an attitude of holiness so that what we do is a witness to the world of a just and holy God. And we work as we are led by the Spirit so that what we do is the outward manifestation of an inward walk of faith. We work like this, *'And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance, for you serve the Lord Christ'* (Colossians 3:23-4)

Ready? The apostle Paul was ready. He deemed it would be better to go to be with the Lord than to stay on earth – but it was more needful for those he served that he stay on earth longer. (Philippians 1:19-26)

The apostle Peter was ready to follow Jesus even if it meant prison or death. (Luke 22:33)

Are you ready? Are you so in love with Jesus that to be with Him would be your best choice, just like Paul? Are you so in love with Jesus that, like Peter, following Him is far more important than the potential cost.

And so to my favourite and frequent prayer, 'Holy Spirit, fill me with more and more love for Jesus.'

Being in love with Jesus is the antidote to the world.

The Spirit and the bride say, *'Come'* Lord Jesus. It may be sooner than we think!

Meet the lions

When in Zimbabwe some years ago I had the great pleasure of meeting 4 baby orphaned lions, no bigger than domestic cats - delightful. About a year later, back in Zimbabwe, once again I met the same 4 lions. Now much bigger, but not yet dangerous, one could still go into the enclosure with them. No longer small and cuddly. But becoming big and strong.

Makes me think about our Christian life. Are we still babes needing milk or have we through diligently partaking of the word become mature and strong in faith? *'The righteous are as bold as a lion.'* Proverbs 28:1. There is THE Great Lion - the Lion of Judah whom we serve and there is the imposter, not a lion, but who roars like a lion trying to intimidate us.

There was a plot, all the governors and other high officials wanted to remove Daniel - so they came up with a wicked scheme. (Read it in Daniel 6). The king, Darius, was tricked into making a new law (laws of the Medes and Persians could not be revoked), forbidding the people from petitioning any god or man continually for 30 days. Daniel would not stop his daily prayers and was 'convicted.' The punishment was to be thrown into the lion's den. As the law could not be revoked Daniel was indeed thrown to the lions. King Darius, was displeased with himself, and stated to Daniel, *'Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.'*

Daniel placed his trust in God, the Great Lion of Judah, and was at rest in the den of lions. God sent an angel which stopped the mouths of the lions who then did not touch Daniel all night.

We have the Great Lion of Judah actually in us and with us in the person of the Holy Spirit. *'Christ in you the hope of glory'* (Colossians 1:27). So when people plot against us or circumstances work against us it's time to listen to the indwelling Spirit. Where we discern our enemy at work Peter tells us to resist him steadfast in our faith and James tells us the devil will flee from us - that is, of course, when we are submitted to God and the devil sees the Lion of Judah at work in us and with us. The devil may roar like a lion but it is only noise - he was defeated at the cross.

Proverbs 30:30 tells us the lion is mighty amongst the beasts and does not turn away from any. Now that we are in Christ and He is in us we are mighty in spiritual strength. We can stand in any and every circumstance and not turn away in fear. Like Daniel there is a place of peace and rest for us even in the presence of our enemies. *'You prepare a table for before me in the presence of my enemies, You anoint my head with oil and my cup overflows.'* Psalm 23:5

Are you as bold as a lion in your faith?

Ignorance is no excuse

Ignorance is sin and sin has to be dealt with by repentance at the cross of Jesus. Unbelievers have no excuse - they can look at creation and see His invisible attributes, His eternal power and Godhead. So actually they know there is God, but won't acknowledge Him so they become futile in their thoughts and in their foolish hearts. (It's all in Romans 1:20-21)

Why is this so? Because *'all things were made through Him and without Him nothing was made that was made.'* John 1:3. When we look at creation we see the work of Jesus, so wonderful that no mere man can achieve anything close. So why isn't Jesus in Genesis 1:1? Oh but He is! He is there as *aleph* and *tav* in Hebrew (*alpha* and *omega* in Greek - one of the titles of Jesus, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.) there right in the middle of Genesis 1:1 are the two Hebrew letters, untranslated because the translators did not know what to do with them. We know Jesus created everything and that today everything is held together by Him. (Colossians 1:17 - *'in Him all things consist.'*) Ignorance has always been a cause of man's downfall. So a remedy was there in the Law - the High priest went into the Holy of Holies once a year, with blood, to offer for the sins committed in ignorance. Hebrews 9:7 Our remedy is Jesus who sets us free (John 8:36) and who sends the Holy Spirit as our helper to maintain that freedom. (John 16:13)

Jesus tells us, *'the truth will set you free'* (literally at liberty) John 8:32, and that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth. So we have no excuse for ignorance, and we do have a part to play. Paul writes to Timothy, *'be diligent (study) to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of God,'* which is *'profitable for doctrine, reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness.'* (2 Timothy 2: 15 and 3:16)

And so to prayer, Holy Spirit please fulfil your Jesus given role and lead me into more and more truth, more and more truth.

My friends, the word is profitable, increase your profit – pray and study the word – become more and more at liberty. Remember sin has consequences which cause loss in a number of ways. Pray for increased sensitivity so that we don't quench the Holy Spirit

(1Thessalonians 5:19) There are no excuses, but praise the Lord there is complete forgiveness, *'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'* 1 John 1:9

The narrow way to the wide place

Most believers are aware of the scripture – *‘Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction. Because narrow is the gate and confined is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.’*

Matthew 7:13-14

The narrowness is Jesus – He is the only way to eternal salvation. For many people that is indeed a stumbling block. But for us who have found eternal life by believing in Jesus, the narrow gate through which we enter leads us into a very wide place – a truth not always understood.

‘I called on the Lord in distress; the Lord answered me and set me in a broad place.’ Psalm 118:5

In the wide place – *‘all things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me but I will not be brought under the power of any.’* 1 Corinthians 6:12

‘All things are lawful for me but not all things edify.’ 1 Corinthians 10:23

In the wide place everything is permitted BUT not everything is helpful, not everything edifies. And of course, our actions have consequences! I can do anything – yes, but!

In the wide place it comes down to the choices we make. Freewill choice is a vital element of God’s Kingdom. The angels exercised choice and a significant number chose to follow satan – fallen angels we call demons.

How we exercise our freewill choice is very important – even seemingly small things can be significant. The length of one's hair seems to be insignificant – but 1 Corinthians 11 tells us it is not so. For a woman her long hair is a symbol of being under authority and it is her glory. For a man, he should not cover his head because he is the image and glory of God. To us this may seem unimportant but the scripture tells us it is important for the sake of the angels. Our biblical choice demonstrates to the fallen angels the error they made by not remaining under God's authority.

Of course there are many matters which we would see as much more important – the choices we make every day demonstrate the Kingdom to all around us as well as to the heavenly realm.

In the very broad place of everyday life and everyday business the choices you make to be holy and righteous and to be led by the Spirit, living by faith, are very important. And be aware that consequences will always follow bad or wrong choices. Zechariah warns – *'who has despised the day of small things? (4:10)*

Let us not be fooled – our choices, even in the small things, are important to our Lord.

Lies, lies and fake news

Jesus described satan as the father of lies in whom there is no truth, and as a murderer, from the beginning. It seems like satan is having a field day now, lies and murder are everywhere increasing – but then satan knows his time is very short.

In the darkness our light shines more brightly, and it is time to shine as brightly as possible so that the witness of the Kingdom of God is unmistakable to all around. Institutionally the church is not doing too well, being drawn aside from the gospel to other matters. So, as always, it is up to us individually to be like Jesus to those we come into contact with.

The world only knows fake news and lies - *'beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world and not according to Christ.'*
Colossians 28 Nothing helpful or good or true there!

We know better. Born again I am a new creation in Christ, the old has passed away. I used to be 'fake news' now I am THE good news – Jesus lives in me. Born again Jesus lives in you. There is nothing greater, nothing more important than this wonderful truth – *'Christ in you the hope of glory.'* Colossians 1:27

Time now for the world to see this wonderful truth in you and in me. The only hope for the lost is Jesus and we are like Him and His ambassadors until He comes. *'As He is so are we in this world.'* 1 John 4:17 Jesus is to be seen in us!

We can counter lies and fake news with the wonderful truth of Jesus who loves us and wants none to perish. Jesus, who is righteous and holy sees us as being like Him - and the Holy Spirit is working, changing us from one degree of glory to another. In everything we do, at home, at work, in business, at leisure we are to be like Jesus so others can see.

Check - is my heart lined up with the truth or am I only concerned with me and my well being? The heart can be a bit tricky - the bible describes it as divided and able to put forth through the mouth both pure water and bitter water. James 3:10

Here is an exhortation from James - *'Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double minded.'* James 4:8.

How are you doing?

Got the wrong agenda?

Scripture tells us of three great judgements. **First**, the flood in the days of Noah. What happened? All the world population, except Noah and family, had the wrong agenda. Even though there was the sign of a 20,000 tons displacement boat built on dry land and Noah preaching for over 100 years, the population stuck to its wrong agenda – *'their every thought was only evil continually.'*

The **second** mighty judgement affects us all. It was the judgement of our sin which was put onto Jesus our saviour. When Jesus came He was rejected by His own. Why? Because the leaders of Israel at the time had the wrong agenda. Did they know Jesus was the Messiah? – yes, of course they did. Jesus proved Himself by doing miracles only the Messiah could do – healing leprosy and casting out dumb demons. Also, the timing of the coming of Jesus as Messiah was well known - it was precisely specified in the prophecy of 70 weeks in the book of Daniel. The Magi, as the spiritual descendants of Daniel, knew full well – and they were watching. They recognised the sign. Regrettably, the leaders of Israel, at the time, had their own agenda - it did not include the Messiah upsetting their position and their rituals.

What about my agenda and your agenda? Have we fixed our own plans and ideas or are we following the lead of the Holy Spirit in the calling which God has prepared beforehand for us? (Ephesians 2:10).

Are we so fixed on our wellbeing, our business, my ministry etc that we have lost sight of Jesus's specific instruction to watch for His return? Are we so concerned with some particular doctrine or calling that we have lost sight of the Messiah Himself and His imminent return and the coming third judgement we are considering - the Day of the Lord, as described in the Book of Revelation.

Jesus said: *'Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.'* Revelation 3:3. The counter to that is that if you will watch, then you will know - indeed that would be like the Thessalonians (1st letter, chapter 5.) Paul, writing to them states that they know. *'But you brethren are not in darkness so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.'* (v. 4)

Are our priorities right? Jesus first and foremost above everything? Looking forward to His return? Or are our plans, our desires, like the famous crooner - 'I did it my way' - I had or have my own agenda! The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come Lord Jesus.' This is the right, the best, the pre-eminent agenda for today.

Three upright hearts?

One of the teachings brought early in the days of ICCC related to the three hearts. Here we are urged to consider God's heart, our own hearts and the hearts of our customers, employees, friends, acquaintances – those we meet. Now we look at them in relation to us being upright for a very good reason.

God's heart is undeniably upright - perfect in every way. He wants none to perish, He is slow to anger and swift to bless. He is also totally righteous in judgement. The Lord God cannot be faulted in any way.

On the other hand my heart needed major surgery and still needs constant attention. Major surgery gave me a new heart – thank you Jesus. My walk through life requires that constant attention to walking in the wonderful righteousness Jesus imputed to me at Calvary. It is a constant choice to put off the old and put on the new. Matthew (12:34) makes it clear that out of the mouth the heart speaks. James makes it clear that from the mouth come both blessings and cursings – it should not be so. Our hearts need constant attention! Thank goodness that the Holy Spirit resides within and changes us from one degree of glory to another and doesn't give up on us!

The heart of others – we meet all sorts from lovely mature believers to unrighteous, even to those who openly prefer evil. Now we need discernment! What to do and say and how to do it and say it. Wise words from the Holy Spirit, at the right time, can bring blessing and a harvest for the Kingdom. Maybe some who are not upright will become upright. Consider God's promise:

'No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.' Psalm 84:11.

Have you been to Italy? Have seen the wondrous Tower in Pisa? It should be upright, but there it is severely leaning over at an angle - looking about ready to fall down. The Tower leans by 4 degrees. It doesn't fall over because its centre of gravity is still within its base - just another 1.5 or so degrees and we will see Luke 13:4 all over again.

But here is the question. When others look at our lives do they see us walking uprightly or are we like the leaning Tower of Pisa – off beam. Fortunately we have the promises of God which means that we will never have our spiritual centre of gravity outside of His Spirit within us, and we have 1 John 1:9 to put us upright again when we slip.

Upright?

Where do you live?

What is my address?

My wife and I live in a very nice cottage style house in West Sussex, in England.

Then we are very fortunate to also have a small holiday home in the West Country.

Then we both have e mail addresses.

And of course, my website.

We both enjoy healthy physical bodies in which we dwell.

All very well and good, but.....

We have another far better address - we can't give you the exact details because the place is currently being prepared for us. Jesus has gone to prepare it! (John 14:1-6) Jesus is the Master Creator, so no doubt it will be perfect, for our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20)

We can access some of the benefits of our new address now - we find them in the Spirit. This is exactly as instructed by the Apostle Paul - put on the new man, that new creation we became when we first believed and live your life in it. (Ephesians 4:17-32 and then walk in unity, in love, in light and in wisdom.)

It is very easy to become earth bound – we do have to live out our lives here, but we are not bound by the ways of the world or by the prince of this world. Our calling is higher, much higher. Walking in the Spirit we can receive the Lord’s direction in all things. Walking in the Spirit we can be alerted to both good things for blessing and to avoid bad and damaging things which seek to destroy and undermine.

Life has been a journey of discovery and learning – with wonderful experiences in the Lord and with recovery from our mistakes by His amazing grace.

We like our new coming address – we love the peace and the joy. We love the world wide family of which we have become part. In our many travels with ICC, teaching TWL in many countries, we had practical experience of what a wonderful family Jesus brought us into at conversion many years ago. However, frequent review can be very helpful -

So now we can ask ourselves some pertinent questions:
Am I earth bound? Am I bound by the ways of this world – or do I enjoy some of the benefits of my new and coming address - now?
Do I live in the new man Paul talks of or in the old man of my flesh with its problems and failures?
Do I walk in unity? Do I walk in love? Do I walk in light? Do I walk in wisdom?

How are you doing - where do you live?

Got myself a jig-saw puzzle

In case you are unfamiliar with jig-saws- it is a piece of card about 70cm by 50cm with a beautiful picture printed on it. Then it is cut into about 1,000 irregular pieces and given to you in a box which has the same picture on the front. Because it has come in pieces my puzzle/job is to put it back together again.

There is only one way and one place in which each piece fits. Sometimes one can force a piece into position - but then the picture gets distorted and other bits don't fit properly.

Bible study can be very similar to doing a jig-saw.

There is only one basic truth no matter how much we may come with pre-conceived ideas, or with something we have been taught in the past, or with the desire to make something fit by trying to 'force' it into place.

It is very common to find it difficult to fully understand the scripture - after all the very simple message of salvation it contains it augmented by much that Kings can search out. *'It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of Kings is to search out a matter.'* Proverbs 25:2

Sometimes I get stuck, I just can't quite see how something fits together - I expect you find the same. But then the Lord has provided the answer - it is better than a copy of the picture on a box like a jig-saw. No, the Lord has provided a helper, One to come alongside and lead me and guide me.

'He will give you another helper that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him: but you know Him, for He dwells with you.' John 14:16-17.
and *'When He the Spirit of truth. has come. He will guide you into all truth.'* John 16:13

Wonderful - having expressed any difficulty in prayer sometimes one has to be patient whilst waiting for the answer to be revealed. Maybe it comes through somebody else, or by further study or even by direct word from the Lord. When the truth is revealed then everything fits perfectly. There is no contradiction, there is no error. It may mean one has to lay down some cherished belief because it doesn't actually fit the whole picture. Maybe by itself it looked alright but in the whole picture it doesn't fit or it contradicts another part - put it aside.

'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.'
John 8:31-32.

A greater revelation can come - the Holy Spirit knows ALL truth. He can reveal truth about your business transactions, about the best path to take, about which deals to avoid - about any and every aspect of your work. What a wonderful helper! Call upon Him!
A question - following your own way, own understanding or submitted to and led by the truth?
Every blessing - I hope you enjoy great freedom.

Why did He come?

We all know that Jesus, Son of God was manifest in the flesh and as we come to a new year here is a reminder of why He came.

To be the Messiah for Israel – yes but rejected.

To save mankind - those who would believe and put their trust in Him - Yes. There is more.

Chosen. He came to choose. He knew, of course from before the foundation of the world – that is His foreknowledge, and in that foreknowledge He chose you and me. Ephesians 1:4 Romans 8:29

Hallelujah – we are chosen. Have we really understood – chosen for what? Chosen to be His bride. He came to choose His bride. He made the sacrifice, laying down His life so that we could qualify by being made righteous. Ephesians 5:25. As Paul put it, *'I have betrothed you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.'* 2 Corinthians 11:2

Then Jesus made a wonderful promise - *'In My Father's house there are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you to Myself: that where I am you may be also.'* John 14:2-3.

When He comes again, and now we have good reason to think it will be soon, He comes for His bride. He comes to receive us to Himself. He comes to bring us to the Father's house where He has prepared a place for us.

Have you thought of it like this. He first came to choose His bride, He comes again to receive His bride unto Himself.

There is a wonderful confirmation in His name. Add together the value of all the Greek letters in Godhead, Jesus, Christ and Son of Man and you get 5920. Add together the value of all the letters of '*Behold the bridegroom cometh go ye out to meet Him*' and you get 5920. All His name adds up to bridegroom – isn't that amazing! (One letter different and it would have failed.)

Our scripture is most wonderfully inspired, way beyond human ability, and it conforms completely who Jesus is and why He came. The Son of God came to choose His bride and will return for His bride at exactly the right moment of time.

This is our inheritance – He is coming for us, we are not appointed to wrath (2 Thessalonians 5:9) but to a glorious reign with Him in His kingdom. Revelation 20:6

In this world there is darkness, and that darkness increases. We are children of light, look up and see – Jesus kingdom awaits us – keep hope burning bright. Every blessing for 2020 – I hope you enjoy being betrothed to Him.

20 20

I have a question for you.

How is your vision? I have been short sighted all my life, but according to my optician when I wear the prescribed glasses my vision is 20 20.

So it is a question of how do you see. Without my specs my vision lacks clarity – such that driving my car would be hazardous. In my spiritual life the same question arises. How do I see? Is my vision blurred or is it 20 20. I certainly want it to be 20 20 for 2020!

Well the first step is be sure one is in touch with the ‘spiritual optician’ – the One who gave us His life and gave us the guide book for life. Then, of course, to be obedient to His directions. Obedience is the hardest part. All of mankind has a default position of going his or her own way – even lovely born again believers can fall into this trap.

Then to be in regular communication through praise, worship, prayer, study and listening for His voice.

Recognising that I was purchased, bought with a price – so that I am not my own, I am His, for Him to lead and guide as He pleases.

Now, with my 20 20 spiritual vision I am ready for the next question -

With my 20/20 vision what do I see? What do you see? We are called to see the very thing He has prepared beforehand for us to walk in. It is marvellous to think the great creator of this universe has prepared a calling for me, a calling for you. We don't have to find our own way – indeed that would be disobedience. In our calling we experience Him, His power, His guidance, His presence and fruitfulness results.

Taking a look in the mirror do I see myself fully in love with Jesus. Do I see myself walking in the light He has given me? Do I see fruitfulness flowing from my restful walk with Him? Or is life a constant struggle and barren? We should always be prepared to be corrected – for it is in the nature of man to easily walk in his own desires and to go astray. The writer to the Hebrews warns us in chapter 6 – even those who have tasted the heavenly gift and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit can fall away and become unfruitful.

Time for a New Year's resolution – Holy Spirit fill me with more and more love for Jesus, and be my constant companion, leading and guiding me through life.

What's in a word?

We use them all the time – words, words, words. Of course sometimes they slip out too quickly and we wish we hadn't spoken – time to apologise maybe.

Words are both important and powerful – James has very strong words about the tongue. It is a fire, a world of iniquity and it is so set among our members that it defiles our whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature and is set on fire by hell. James 3:6.. Strong stuff, and an important warning.

Words are powerful, both for good and for bad – its up to us how we use them. When we allow Him, the Spirit will be gatekeeper of our mouths - He gives the gift of speaking in tongues which demonstrates His control over this potentially dangerous member of our bodies. James again – out of the same mouth proceed both blessings and cursing, my friends these things ought not to be. (verse 10) Beware, we can actually bring cursing upon ourselves (and others) by what we say, because what we say can come from either faith or from unbelief. 'I knew it wouldn't work out,' or 'nothing good happens to me,' 'or my business doesn't work well,' can be self imposed curses – statements of unbelief with consequences.

Take King Asa in the Old Testament. Mostly a good King of Judah, with wonderful promises from God. He removed many idols. He led the people in a covenant with God - to seek Him with their whole heart.

BUT when King Baasha of Israel threatened to bash and attack Judah, Asa turned to the King of Syria for help and not to the Lord. Later when Asa was diseased in his feet and his sickness was severe he turned to the physicians – in neither case did he turn to the Lord even though he had received wonderful promises from God. There were consequences of course – he died from the sickness a couple of years later. Its all in 2 Chronicles 16.

We need to deal carefully with words. A word from the Lord is to be taken seriously, whether it be through prophecy as with King Asa, or by scripture quickened by the Spirit or by direct 'rhema' word from God. A faith response is required, and not an unbelief response. *'Faith comes from hearing and hearing from the rhema word of God.'* Romans 10:17 We too have wonderful promises from the Lord – let us turn to Him in times of need. Hebrews 4:16

We, who claim to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, are required to learn how to bridle our tongue otherwise we deceive ourselves. James 1:16 So ask yourself – have I learnt to bridle my tongue, do I speak blessing or cursing?

Off went the light

Great was the fall of Lucifer (light bearer) because he fell from a very high place! He set his heart to be like the Most High though he was just a created being – an anointed cherub. He fell from his high and anointed place because of his rebellion. Jesus saw him fall – *‘I saw satan fall like lightning from heaven.’* (Luke 10:18) Yes Lucifer’s fall cost him his position, his name, (he became satan), and, of course, his light was switched off. Consequences!

He became the accuser of the brethren – that is our great enemy, the accuser of you and me. However, so great was Jesus victory and so great is the power and might of the Holy Spirit in us that we have nothing to fear. (1 John 4:4) But, we do need to be aware – because satan prowls around like a roaring lion seeking to devour. (1 Peter 5:8) Praise the Lord for the gift of discernment by which we are alerted to enemy activity. Praise the Lord for power and authority over all the works of satan.

Light is very important - God is light, as well as His other characteristics. We are described as the light of the world. Light is vital. Things don’t prosper in darkness!

Our Lord has promised never to leave us or forsake us and has sealed His promise with a guarantee – His Spirit indwelling us. At the same time He urges us – *‘Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.’* (Matthew 5:16)

We are the light of the world, like a city set on a hill or a light on a lampstand - visible to everyone and providing light. (Matthew 5:14-15) What about every aspect of my life and your life - are there things we do, at home, at work, in business, which are not fit for the lampstand but rather we hide them under a basket - where they are done in darkness?

For Satan the consequences of his fall were final - no way back. For us our errors, even our disobedience are already forgiven through the blood sacrifice of Jesus, and we keep clean by confession and repentance. *'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'* (1 John 1:9) As Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery - *'I do not condemn you, go and sin no more.'* (John 8:11)

So for the year ahead we can also receive the same message from Jesus - go and sin no more!

Keep your light shining brightly! Our lives won't prosper in darkness.

Niggle, niggle, niggle

Do you ever feel got at! Frequent or constant niggles both big and small. Welcome to the normal Christian life! Take Paul. He was constantly got at by a thorn in the flesh – direct from satan, NOT FROM GOD! He pleaded with God for it to be stopped - but God said, *'My grace is sufficient for you.'* (2 Corinthians 12) Why didn't God stop satan? Well we have to go to Ephesians 6 to see what Paul came to understand. Paul again – *'Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.'* Paul had learnt that God's grace was indeed sufficient, and that whilst it was annoying to have frequent opposition from the devil and his minions, nevertheless, with perseverance he could withstand in the evil day and having done all he could stand.

Peter taught the same message, *'Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour Resist him, steadfast in the faith knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.'* 1 Peter 5:8-9

God did not stop satan from attacking Paul, nor from attacking the people Peter wrote to. Instead He gives them and us, utterly by grace, the indwelling Holy Spirit. Now we have the power and authority to resist and to overcome the devils wiles.

Back to Paul and Ephesians. *'Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.'* We are not powerless against the wiles of the devil, rather we are empowered to resist in God's power and might, not our own, through the indwelling Spirit.

When God resists He does so in full battle array. '*God resists the proud,*' resists is 'antitasso' used only when speaking of the resistance of God against the proud and other 'enemies.' When we resist the devil in the power and might of God we are in full battle array - hence the importance of putting on the whole armour of God.

However, do we, in daily life just put up with difficulties? Do we fail to consider the likelihood of spiritual opposition? Do we actually resist? Do we, in the name of Jesus, take authority over the works of the enemy?

This is God's eternal purpose - that by us His manifold wisdom may demonstrated to principalities and powers. Ephesians 3:10.

There is a saying, 'it's time to wake up and smell the coffee.' Ask your self - when was the last time I actively resisted the devil? When was the last time I took authority over the works of the devil. (See Luke 10:19) Or do I just put up with everything thrown against me, my family, my work, my wellbeing?

Health to all our flesh

'My son pay attention to all My words; incline your ear to My sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.' Proverbs 4:20-23

'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God..... and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' John 1:1 and 14

The Feast of Tabernacles – the great feast. All Jews were expected to travel to Jerusalem for the great feast, so Jerusalem would have been thronging with people. In the morning there is the water offering. A priest carries a large golden wide mouthed jug down to the Pool of Siloam to get water, accompanied by a large procession. Returning to the Temple, where a huge crowd is gathered, the water is ceremoniously poured out on the altar as the priests chant, *'With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation'* Isaiah 12:3

In the midst of this - *'On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, "If anyone thirsts let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.'* John 7:37-39
[Spirit given later John 20:22]

Good health for us

'And if Christ is in you, the body is dead (sentenced to death) because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.' Romans 8:10-11

The conclusion - therefore live according to the Spirit. As we saw in Proverbs the Word is health to all our flesh. Want to be healthy - then make Jesus, the living Word, the most important focus of life. In all things make Him King and Lord, live by the Spirit and then experience in greater and greater measure - *'whoever drinks of the water I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.'* John 4:14
Be healthy.

Tug of War

Did you know the 'Tug of War' used to be an Olympic event! Until 1920. Perhaps you are not familiar with it. A long rope with a marker in the middle and two teams, one at each end, facing each other. Each team puts their strongest and heaviest man at the very end as 'the anchor.' When the whistle blows the teams pull hard against each other trying to pull the opposition across to their side. The game ends when one team has successfully hauled the other team across.

Did you know the Christian life can look like a tug of war. On one side there is our enemy, the devil, all his troops from Ephesians 6:12, the world and all its influence and our own flesh – a formidable team. On the other side there we are in spirit and as our anchor grace and anointing. Have you noticed we are found on both sides!

You can read Romans 7 to see Paul experiencing his own tug of war – and concluding '*O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this death.*' And then knowing, '*I thank God – through Jesus Christ our Lord.*' Jesus is the deliverer. Paul knew, because God told him, that in all the struggles of the tug of war, God's grace was sufficient – always there, the ultimate anchor. 2 Corinthians 12:9.

We win when we live and walk by the Spirit, in the anointing and the grace of God. We lose when we follow the ways of the world, the ways of our own desires, and when we fall for the wiles of the devil.

In some ways it seems a tall order – there is so much lined up in opposition. But He that is in us is greater, actually much much greater. (1 John 4:4) The anointing of God, which works with us in our calling, brings a level of blessing in business that manifests in various ways. Many are the testimonies to that effect amongst our members because it is the calling of ICCC. ‘There is an anointing available for those with eyes to see and ears to hear the call of the times.’

Now the Lord is showing the Kingdom that cannot be shaken. He will send it down to those who believe that the Lord is faithful and real. There is an encroaching tide – we see it in various ways, climate, business failures, increasing ungodliness and so on. Now is the time to live by the Spirit and rise above it and demonstrate God’s ultimate goodness.

Don’t forget, you are invited to the throne of grace in time of need. Hebrews 4:16. Come boldly and make the grace of God your anchor.

Rock solid

Absolute certainty in every situation and at all times. *'He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.'* Hebrews 7:24-25.

That's it - we are saved to the uttermost. Our eternal salvation is rock solid! It's not the same as saying our entire journey through life will be problem free. Indeed the scripture says the opposite - work out the salvation of your soul (not spirit) with fear and trembling. (Philippians 2:12)

Run the race, fight the fight - but know this for sure, you are saved to the uttermost.

Jesus has done everything necessary for life and godliness - *'His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.'* 2 Peter 1:3.

This is the same Peter who in his previous letter told them to resist the devil, steadfast, that is rock solid, in the faith. Ok - so times can get tough, things can get very difficult, what do you expect in a world full of fallen mankind aided by enemy forces, spiritual hosts of wickedness.

To Elisha's servant it was a terrifying sight - the Syrian army surrounding them. He hit the panic button - *'Alas my master what shall we do.'* His problem was that he was only looking in the natural realm. Elisha prays and the servant's eyes are opened to see the massive spiritual forces all around Elisha. 2 Kings 6:15-23.

We can have the same problem! You cannot defeat spiritual forces in the natural realm. Jesus has done everything necessary so let's rejoice in that, 'coming boldly to the throne of grace in time of need.'

(Hebrews 4:16) It is not weakness on our part. We know we do not rely on our own strength. Our faith in Jesus is rock solid so we know for certain that He hears us when we come and that He knows exactly how to bring good out of every situation for us. Come boldly, don't hold back, ask, listen and obey. Patience may be needed.

Problems are resolved, whether they be purely 'natural' or 'spiritual' or a mixture. Jesus has done everything necessary - its rock solid.

Our difficulty is us. Sometimes we hesitate and hold back because we haven't been wise builders. We have been building on sand instead on the solid foundation of Jesus. Or we don't think He will hear or come to our aid.

Jesus has given us the right to become children of God - now we are the children of God, our Father, who welcomes us to His throne - its rock solid.

Evening and morning

Have you noticed the bible starts a 24 hour day in the evening. There it is right in the very beginning, - *'the evening and the morning were the first day,'* Genesis 1:5 *'So the evening and the morning were the second day.'* Genesis 1:8 And so on.

Once we count from the evening we solve one of the apparent contradictions of scripture (actually there aren't any) Jesus rose on the third day. Jesus was in the tomb three days and three nights. Seemingly contradictory statements! Solved - Jesus body was put in the tomb early in the evening - count night one. In the morning which followed count day 1 then that evening count night two, then day 2 - continue in that manner and you will complete three nights before Jesus rises on the third day.

There is a great principle here. In Genesis we read that the earth was prepared for mankind in a sequence of creative actions which followed the darkness of the earth in verse 2. Here is an important progression - from darkness to light.

This is what Jesus has done for every believer - transferred us from darkness to light. Once we had nothing to go by but only darkness, now we have His glorious light, not only with us but in us through His Spirit. It is rather like the psalmist, *'weeping may endure for a night - that is in the darkness, but joy comes in the morning - that is in the light.'*

And so, this is what Jesus has done for me and for you, He transferred us from darkness to light, from no hope at all into His joy - the joy of the Lord. *'Do not sorrow for the joy of the Lord is your strength.'* Nehemiah 8:10 Peter put it like this, *'Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.'* 1 Peter 1:8

When times are difficult, hard, and bring sorrow then remember, chose to bring to mind, the wonderful deliverance Jesus has achieved for you. Then put on the garment of praise. The spirit of heaviness will depart - no need to let things depress us and get us down. He will never leave us nor forsake us, He will bring good out of every situation for us. God is good. Sometimes it takes effort to start to praise God - especially if we come from a dark place, a place of difficulty or even a place of tragedy. Yet be transformed by the renewing of your mind, and sing and shout your praises to God, breakthrough into the inexpressible joy of the Lord - it is the place of strength for life.

The best wine

We know Jesus performed many miracles. In the Gospel of John there are 8 miracles specifically called or known as 'sign' miracles. Every miracle was, of course, in itself a sign confirming Jesus as the expected Messiah, but these 8 in John are known to carry a message beyond their immediate time. These 8 miracles speak specifically to either Israel or the Gentiles or to both.

We know we are betrothed to Jesus as His bride. (Romans 7:4, 2 Corinthians 11:2) In that context consider the first of the sign miracles in John 2:1-11. Jesus was present at a wedding and the wine had run out. Jesus mother told the servants to do whatever Jesus told them to do. 6 water pots were standing there. Fill the pots with water, Jesus instructed. Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast. He didn't know where this wine had come from but declared the, water now changed into wine, to be the best wine.

How can we interpret this sign miracle. The pots were used for the water purified according to the manner of the Jews (see that in Numbers 19). The purified water, whilst very significant, was inadequate for salvation. Only trust in the blood of Jesus, always represented by wine, brings salvation. The 6 pots could represent the 6 days of creation and thus 6,000 years of our existence on earth, with the best wine kept to the end! All that had gone before was not as good as the wine coming at the end.

It is time to lift our expectation. Now is the time of the best wine. It is appreciated and experienced through the wonderful gift of faith, by which we become partakers of the Holy Spirit. We taste the good word (rhema - spoken word) of God and the powers of the age to come. (Hebrews 6:4-5) We come to experience that every good and perfect gift comes down from above. (James 1:17) This is not the time for doubt and it is not the time to hold back. Now is the time to come boldly to the throne of grace for more of this new wine. (Hebrews 4:16)

Jesus instructed us to drink His blood - a difficult saying not meant to be taken literally but rather metaphorically. Drinking His blood is taking into ourselves the best wine. Taking what He has done and accomplished right into the very centre of souls and our beliefs.

'For the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit'

Romans 14:17. Drink up, now is the time to experience the best wine.

Abide here for fruitfulness

'By this My Father is glorified that you bear much fruit.'

In so saying Jesus declares the objective for every Christian life.

John 15:1-8 is all about fruitfulness yet often misunderstood. A detailed look at verse 2 will bring some clarity. *'Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He lifts up (airo in Greek - to lift up) and every branch in Me that bears fruit He cleanses (kathairo in Greek - to cleanse) that it may bear more fruit.'*

This is talking about us - every born again believer is now in Jesus, who loses not a single one, but that one destined for perdition, Judas Iscariot. *'You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.'* (Verse 3) Then Jesus goes on to say that we are to abide ('meno' in Greek - to dwell, abide.) in Him, the vine, as we cannot bear fruit of ourselves. 'Our Good works' count for nothing - only those works ordained, led, and performed in the Spirit are 'fruit.'

Then Jesus talks of unbelievers in verse 6, that is those who are not His - anyone who does not dwell in Him. These Jesus says are 'cast out' or 'thrown away,' gathered and thrown into the fire - certainly not a description of precious born again, spirit indwelt believers of whom Jesus loses not even one. (John 17:12)

Here comes the best business and life plan - Now, dwell, abide in Me and let My words (words I speak to you) dwell in you - then ask what you desire, in the context of the word He has spoken to you, and it will be done for you. *'By this My Father is glorified'*

Our Father in heaven is glorified by us doing those things that Jesus speaks to us through the Holy Spirit - this is the testimony of ICC, the business life that becomes the outward manifestation of an inward walk of faith - faith that comes by hearing God speak.. We don't live in fear, as unbelievers do, that somehow we fall short and are in danger of being cut off and thrown into the fire. Certainly we all fall short to some degree, but the Spirit who dwells in us changes us from one degree of glory to another and bit by bit we become more like Jesus - truly we are cleansed and lifted up to bear more fruit.

Have you seen a vineyard - there are the vines with their branches lifted up and tied in, to bear much fruit. Our Father is the vinedresser - lovingly tending us, the born again believers, the body and bride of Christ.

Assets and liabilities

We know that good earthly business makes best use of our assets and minimises our liabilities. How about good life and business in the Spirit?

<p>Assets: Born again and Spirit filled and deeply loved. Truth - as God breathed in scripture Called and Anointed by God Grace and hope Authority over all the works of the enemy</p>	<p>Liabilities: Our own fleshly desires The world with its ungodly pressures Peers with the pressure they bring Satan and hosts of wickedness</p>
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<p>Tools and aides: Communication with God - praise, worship and prayer and listening. Particularly praying for more and more love for Jesus and more and more understanding of the truth. Having these in abundance will create in you a strong faith. Gifts of the Spirit Increasing revelation of biblical truth as we study Renewing the mind - taking authority over our own thinking, keeping it clean and aligning it with biblical truth, with our calling and with God's spoken instructions. Exercising the authority we have over the works of the enemy and over our own flesh.</p>

Challenge:

Make a review of your life and business. Are you maximising the use of your assets and minimising liabilities? Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any areas which can be improved. (But don't go looking for problems – just ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any areas for improvement.)

Result: Increase in fruitfulness.

'By this My Father is glorified that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.' John 15:8

As in the days

It teemed with rain for the entire day. We were on our way to see Noah's Ark, well a half size reconstruction of Noah's Ark docked in Ipswich UK –so maybe the weather was appropriate. Even at half size the ark was massive and the tabloids inside told the bible story well.

Jesus said, 'As the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.' Matthew 24:37-38.

Awareness was missing in the population of that time. Even though there was Noah preaching and building this enormous ark. The people of that time just carried on as if nothing was going to happen. They ignored the obvious sign and were willfully unaware!

So now a question – are we/you aware of the times? Or are we/you living as if things will go on, as they are, for ever? We are expected to be aware. 'But you brethren are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.' 1 Thessalonians 5:4

ICCC sounds a call to fall in line with God's plan for these times as the key to blessing and development and in order to rise victoriously above the encroaching tide.

Key:

Fall in line with Ephesians 2:10 – that is doing the specific good works God has prepared for you – that is known as your calling.

Blessing – in your calling there is the anointing of God - the following wind of the Spirit bringing blessing. Rise above victoriously- is the opposite to being swamped and submerged. Rising above is achieved by faith - that is by hearing God speak and doing what He says.

Encroaching tide - not specified but not a universal flood (Genesis 9:12-17). The current outbreak of coronavirus is an example of a type of encroaching tide. The whole manufacturing industry in China was shut down by it. The virus is causing extensive disruption and could yet cause a great deal more.

Challenge - do you understand that Jesus is definitely returning (see John 14: 1-6) and that the nation of Israel stands as testimony to that, together with many other signs. Life, as we know it now, will not go on indefinitely. Will you be found doing the will of the Father, rising above the encroaching tide?

The 1st lesson in leadership

You must be a follower!

Leadership is quite a responsibility – according to Romans 12:4 leadership requires diligence. That is in particular to be diligent in one's own relationship with the Lord first and foremost - a diligent follower. As a follower of the Lord, one who leads must be diligent to be closely in touch with Him through the Spirit. Jesus said, *'without Me you can do nothing,'* not meaning you cannot do anything but definitely meaning you cannot do anything of eternal value - fruitful. (John 15)

By observation, we see that those who lose sight of being first and foremost a diligent follower of Jesus in truth soon fall away from God's purposes and lead many astray.

Leadership leads by example whether be good or bad. Hence the requirement for diligence in our own lives. A leader must be accustomed to hearing the guidance and direction of the Spirit of God. He must know as a certainty that the guidance of the Spirit will never contradict the terms of the written word of the New Covenant. He must do what the Spirit directs even if it is inconvenient. The good leader knows that the Spirit and the Truth work together

The leader will know and apply Proverbs 3:5, - *'trust the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths.'* Then he will be equipped to stand before others in leadership.

The leader will recognise that like all gifts from God it is by grace. He will understand that leadership is not a high position of personal glory but rather it is position of service – the leader is a servant to the body.

The leader should know that God builds His church on the foundation, first of Jesus and then of Apostles, Prophets and Teachers (1 Corinthians 12:28) The leader should know that it is God's intention that these fellow servants of Christ work together and not in isolation and that they appoint elders in every place to oversee the body.

In one sense we are all leaders – there will be those who look to you and me as examples, whether we hold a leadership position in life or in business or not. So as believers we all share the same responsibilities.

Everyone of us can be led by the Spirit, everyone of us can read and learn the scripture, everyone of us can make the right choices in life and be good examples and thus be fruitful.

'By this My Father is glorified that you bear much fruit.'

John 15:8

The Kingdom that cannot be shaken

21st July 1985 prior to the founding meeting of ICCC Gunnar received a prophecy which spoke of the Kingdom that cannot be shaken. The prophecy told of difficult times and the International Board talked of the walk of faith to rise above the encroaching tide.

Right now the world is experiencing a major pestilence. We shouldn't be surprised Matthew speaks of pestilences along with earth quakes and famines. (chapter 24:7)

We don't know what the outcome of the current pestilence will be and to what degree it will destabilise the world economy. We do know that we belong to the Kingdom that cannot be shaken, so we can be sure of our eternal destiny and we can have peace in the midst of whatever is to come.

In difficult times we may have to dig deep into our spiritual resources. It is all too easy for anxiety and fear to get inroads into our thinking. It is time to renew our minds, to think on the sovereignty of God, on His abundant love and His abundant grace. Our Lord is not surprised and certainly not shaken by what is happening.

It is a time for listening – because faith comes by hearing God speak. In these days we need to be sensitive to Him, to every way in which He speaks, and particularly to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit.

Now is a time to be strong in our walk with the Lord, like a tall tree, or bush bearing fruit. A time to be a shelter for any weaker brethren. We can do it – as we walk closely with the Lord.

Remember Psalm 23 where David is told that the Lord prepares a table for him in the midst of his enemies. David knew that he was to receive all the provision he needed in a place of peace as God led him in the paths of righteousness. David knew he may walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet he would fear no evil. Psalm 23 is a good guide for us as David speaks the truth - You anoint my head with oil, my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Paul advises the Ephesians not to give the devil any place or opportunity (4:27). James warns that our tongues can defile the whole body. Now it is time to be especially careful in what we think and what we say.

1st Lesson in Hope

Hope is a key to entering into the presence of God.

Unbelievers have no hope for eternity and their hope in this life is limited to their own abilities and achievements.

We, believers, on the other hand are made in the very image of God – and whilst we wait for our eternal dwelling we have access to the throne of grace and are empowered with authority over all the works of the enemy.

Hope starts with receiving the revealed truth – many scripture verses talk of God’s goodness and faithfulness. We can receive the truth or we can reject the truth. Hope also comes when God speaks to us – the same applies, we can receive it or reject it, Jesus made that clear when teaching about the vine in John 15.

Remember when satan tempted Eve he said, ‘did God say?’ Today there are many sources of doubt – is the bible really God breathed or just the idea of men? Surely some of the New Covenant is not relevant today – we have moved on so I can ignore it! And so hope is diminished and we find our relationship with the Lord cools. Now we don’t expect Him to act on our behalf. We have lost the relationship with the Lord as a loving Father who cares for us.

1st lesson in hope. Meditate on the word of God, drink it in. Take a verse like James 1:17, *'Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.'* Learn it by heart, chew it over and fully digest it. Take Romans 8:28 *'And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.'* Are you born again? You have been called by God into His family.

The more we reflect the image of God the greater will be our hope - certainty of God's blessing. The Holy Spirit is doing His bit by changing us from one degree of glory to another. 2 Corinthians 3:18. The more we receive and take in the truth and let that truth sink right in, the quicker will be the transformation into the likeness of Christ and our ability to stand in uncertain times will be enhanced.

Today the world is shaking from a pandemic - we do not need to shake, we have a loving Father who will lead us and guide us by His Spirit - it is up to us to listen and be guided.

Want more - get the booklet and the video 'Hope - the certainty of future blessing' in the TWL series.

A three pronged attack

The world is reeling under the effects of a pandemic. Let us not be confused about it – this does not come from the Lord.

In caricature the devil is often pictured with a three pronged fork going about his business. It has struck me that there are three particular forces at work now. First and most obvious the virus itself bringing sickness and death.

Secondly there is fear. The airwaves are full of bad news fuelling fear – but then we know that the devil is the prince of the power of the air, so we should not be surprised. The antidote to this fear is obedience to the words of scripture. There are hundreds of references ‘do not fear,’ ‘do not be afraid,’ ‘fear not’ and so on. It is a question of renewing the mind, refusing to allow fear in our thinking.

‘Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.’ Isaiah 41:10

The third prong of the fork is more subtle – affecting even mature believers. There are powers at work encouraging and bringing despair and despondency, seeking to bring us into depression. It is very easy to slip into negative thinking especially with all the restrictions and the unknowns in this situation.

We can start to guard ourselves against this subtle attack by being aware that it is happening, maybe to us, but certainly to some brothers and sisters we know.

Then, if we feel ourselves beginning to slip – then its time, as a cold blooded choice, to put on the garment of praise.

Sing, shout – put on praise music, *‘For the LORD is great and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods.’*

Psalm 96:4 Praise is the antidote to the spirit of heaviness. Isaiah 61:3

Isaiah goes on, *‘that they may be called trees of righteousness.’* Now we can make a link to the founding prophecy of ICC. Big trees to help, to protect, to give encouragement to those who are finding the going tough. A storm has struck the world, now is the time to stand up. Now is the time to be alert in the Spirit to what the Lord God is saying to us individually and corporately.

Now is the time to know that God is for us and not against us and that He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world. Now we can be a blessing to those around us as His Spirit leads us.

Comfort

For us together.

'Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you are doing.' (1 Thessalonians 5:11) Comfort is 'paramuthion' – speak closely and tenderly. Edify is 'oikodomeo' – to build a house used metaphorically. Got the message – now is a time when we need to be strong in our faith. We can support each other by speaking tenderly with strong encouragement build one another up.

For us individually

Jesus has given us sources of comfort - the Holy Spirit.

He is The Comforter. He is the 'another Helper' who abides with us forever. (John 14:16) Another Helper - 'allos parakletos' – one of the same type as Jesus called alongside – forever.

God the Father is the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, that we may be able to comfort others. This is one of the roles of the Holy Spirit - to bring the comfort of God the Father to us. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

To access and enjoy – seek some quiet time, cast your burdens on Jesus, be at rest, pray and love the Lord with all your heart. *'And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.'* Philippians 4:7 True comfort.

Jesus has given us sources of comfort – the scriptures.

'We through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.' Romans 15:4. Meditating on scripture is a great source of comfort.

Get comfortable, take a verse and meditate on it. In your mind go over and over it - let it deep down inside - *'Meditate within your heart, on your bed, and be still.'*

Psalm 4:4

As one is quiet and still and meditating on the presence of the Holy Spirit and the scripture it is easy to slip into sleep – what a blessing, and fulfilment of Psalm 127:2 – *'God gives His beloved sleep.'*

When all seems very hard remember our great hope - Jesus will return, *'then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.'* 1

Thessalonians 4:17-18. It is much closer now.

Finally – *'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.'*

Colossians 3:16 And Jesus Himself will comfort our hearts. (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17)

Be comforted, bring comfort and be blessed and be a blessing,

Love changes everything

If one could put words into the mouth of God what would He say? I think He would say, 'Trust Me, I love you, trust Me.' His love changes everything. The wonderful sacrifice of Jesus on the cross made it possible. His love, demonstrated by blood sacrifice, wiped away everything that stood between us and the Lord God. When I placed my trust in Jesus everything changed - though at the time my understanding was limited.

'Trust Me.' I know the plans I have for you, I have prepared good works for you to walk in.'

'Trust Me.' I invite you to My throne of grace, I will help you in times of need.

'Trust Me.' I have gone to prepare a place for you, I will come and take you to be with Me,'

'Trust Me because I love you.'

'Trust Me.' Even if you are unfaithful, I will remain faithful because I cannot deny the Holy Spirit I have placed within you.

(Ephesians 2:10, Hebrews 4:16, John 14:1-6, 2 Timothy 2:13)

This is the meaning of FAITH, faith means TRUST. Everything He has written in the scripture is good for us, for our doctrine, our understanding - have faith, trust it and apply it.

'My sheep hear My voice.' I speak to you because I love you. Listen and apply. Trust what I say to you because faith comes by hearing Me speak. (Romans 10:17) This is the outworking of My love for you and this is the meaning of Faith.

This is My desire for you – that you, the just (those established by God as righteous) , shall live by faith. (Romans 1:17) *The righteous are as bold as a lion.* (Proverbs 28:1)

I have set a principle in My word - *give and it will be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over.* This is My love at work. But many are lukewarm because they do not know My love in its fullness. I want your love, as it is written, *'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and your soul, all your mind and all your strength.'* Put My principle of giving into practice – love Me. My Holy Spirit will help fill you with love for Me – just ask and keep asking. Then love will abound.

Love changes everything.

This is our destiny - *'the righteous shall shine forth as the sun, in the Kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.'* (Matthew 13:43.)

The we will say and know – *'love has changed everything!'*

What do you say Lord?

Samuel was still a young boy when the Lord spoke to him, calling ‘*Samuel.*’ The boy thought it was Eli, the High Priest. Three times the Lord calls, ‘*Samuel,*’ and the boy runs to Eli. Then the ‘penny drops’ and Eli tells Samuel how to answer if the Lord calls again. Indeed the Lord calls a fourth time, ‘*Samuel, Samuel.*’ – *he answers, ‘Speak for Your servant hears.’*

Like Samuel, we can be slow to understand sometimes. We can be slow to fully realise our place in the Lord. We are His servants. We are here to serve Him and to serve each other.

Scripture gives us certain directions:

Worship – Jesus, when satan seeks Jesus to worship him, says, ‘*Get behind Me satan, For it is written – you shall worship the Lord your God and Him only you shall serve.*’ Our worship is very important! It is an expression of our love.

Service is duty. In the short parable in Luke 17:7-10 we have a hard working servant who is required, when he has done all his work, to serve his master before he can sit down and eat himself. Our Lord comes first.

Greatness is serving. Jesus came among us as One who serves. Luke again, 22:24-27, ‘*the greatest among you, let him be as the younger and he who governs as he who serves.*’

Service follows. To serve means to follow instructions – from Jesus, of course. John 12:26 and the servant will receive honour from the Father.

Liberty. We are called to liberty, that is complete freedom. Paul warns, *'do not use your liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.'* Galatians 5:13 Humility is required.

The warning:

No man can serve two masters - *'you cannot serve God and Mammon.'* Matthew 6:24 Mammon is a challenge to everyone. We work to earn, we engage in business for profit, as the saying goes, *'money makes the world go round.'* There is nothing wrong with working, earning , making a profit - the labourer is worthy of his hire. It goes wrong when money becomes a too big a focus in our lives. When we start to worry about money we not demonstrating trust in our Lord. The love of money is the root of all (kinds of) evil. Straying from faith in God because of money leads to many sorrows . (1 Timothy 6:10)

Here is the conclusion - what do You say Lord? - that I will happily do because I love You, it is a joy to serve. And so I will listen for your voice, speak Lord for Your servant hears.

A message from James for this time

'My brethren count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.' (Chapter 1 verses 2-3)

Here an essential understanding - *'Let no one say when he is tempted (peirasmos – tempt, test, try), I am tempted (or tested, or tried) by God; for God cannot be tempted (or tested or tried) by evil nor does He Himself tempt (or test or try) anyone.'* (verse 13)

Often one hears people say 'God is testing me' or 'God is trying to teach me something.' This is not the case. Rather James says our own desires tempt us to evil. To that one can add circumstances can be a trial and tempt us into wrong thinking.

The Lord God knows exactly what is happening and He knows what each of us is thinking. And He says *'count it all joy when trials come.'* Because each and every trial is an opportunity. Each trial is an opportunity to choose 'life' - that is to choose that aspect of our lives that is hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3)

Peter brings out an important truth when writing to wives, he urges them to 'let the hidden person of their hearts shine through.' (1 Peter 3:4.) This applies to us all. We have this wonderful resource within us, residing in the hidden person of our hearts - *'the water I (Jesus speaking) shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.'* (John 4:14)

Our current worldwide trial, caused by man's unhealthy ways is an opportunity for us to dwell in the spirit- in the hidden person of the heart where we find communion with Jesus. Our time then becomes pleasant, a joy.

Back to James where he says let patience have its perfect work - here patience is *'hupomono'* which Strong's defines as 'cheerful (or hopeful) endurance, patience.' This patience is doing a perfect work. Making us perfect and lacking nothing. As we are cheerfully patient the Spirit is working in us, bringing us to perfection, lacking nothing - no wonder James said, *'count it all joy!'*

It comes down to our choice - will we live in this, or any trial, at the level of our souls, our own thinking, our own human power, or in the spirit in the power of the hidden person of the heart.

I know my choice - to look beyond the trial to see the glorious result of cheerful patience, making me perfect lacking nothing - what is your choice?

Grace and peace from Jesus and the 7 spirits

This is from the Revelation of Jesus Christ – ‘*Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before His throne.*’ (1:4)

We will have heard about grace and peace from Jesus, but how many have ever noticed this verse in Revelation. Before His throne are seven spirits who are also sending grace and peace to believers. Later in chapter 1 we see mention of 7 stars (angels of the churches) and 7 lampstands (the churches in Asia.) But I think we have to look further afield to identify these spirits greeting us with grace and peace.

Isaiah 11 has the answer. ‘*There shall come forth a Rod (more literally, slender and flexible , a twig - reference to Jesus) from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch (a name for Jesus) shall grow out of its roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him (1). The spirit of wisdom (2) and understanding (3). The spirit of counsel (4) and might (5), The spirit of knowledge (6) and of the fear of the Lord (7).*’

So now we can consider who is greeting us with grace and peace, as well as Jesus of course. The Spirit of the Lord is the Holy Spirit – we know Him as the one who brings Jesus words to us, and the one who is changing us from one degree of glory to another – ever present within us. We can and do fellowship with Him.

We can fellowship also with wisdom, with understanding, with counsel, with might, and with knowledge - all in the fear of the Lord. Fear as in a revelation of our weakness in the presence of the Almighty - awe of Him, who loves us with an everlasting love. These are resources for our life and benefit. Ask and you will receive.

In life there will be countless times when seeking and receiving guidance will invoke one or more of the 7 spirits before the throne. How wonderful to know we can seek and receive these precious attributes of the character of God for practical help. I am not advocating praying to the 7 spirits, no, we pray to the Father through Jesus the Son. Yet it is wonderful to know His provision for us, the things we need, are also 7 spirits always before His throne who wish us grace and peace wanting us to be filled with their attributes too.

The more we receive of these 7 attributes in our own characters the more we will enjoy grace and peace, and the more we will love the Lord our God who chooses us as His bride.

Walking safely through life

Life is full of 'ups' and 'downs.' Right now many around the world are, or have been, experiencing 'lockdown,' due to covid 19 - a trying time for everyone and dangerous for all. The future is now uncertain. Walking safely through life is an important concept and the scripture comes with clear instructions.

'Wisdom is the principal thing.' Proverbs 4:7 There is nothing more important than wisdom - so a definition will help. *'Wisdom is that which the Lord God considers to be right.'* Apply you ear and listen out for wisdom.

Understanding, and knowledge with discernment are added to the mix. Proverbs 2:2-3.

Now, together we have the very ingredients Jesus used to create the heavens and the earth. Proverbs 3:19.

Want promotion? Get wisdom - *'she will promote you, she will bring you honour when you embrace her. She will place on your head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory she will deliver to you.'* Proverbs 4:8-9.

Everything we need for a safe walk through life is to found as we give attention to wisdom's words and as we incline our ears to her sayings. The words wisdom will speak are truth and life and will be health to our flesh. Wisdom instructs, *'keep your heart with all diligence.'* Proverbs 4:20-23

We find the source of all wisdom when we see Jesus. He alone is the way, the truth and the life. Come to the source, ask and you will receive. In one sense we have all wisdom in the Holy Spirit dwelling within our human spirit. Problems arise from our souls which easily develop strong desires of their own. The spirit and the soul are together biblically called the heart. The heart is divided. Jeremiah warns us – *'the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.'* 17:9

It should be obvious that the born again human spirit, which is indwelt by the Holy Spirit is in no way desperately wicked - quite the opposite, we have received the gift of righteousness. So Jeremiah's warning applies to our human soul. Our own thinking and desires, as opposed to the wisdom God gives, will lead us astray. See also James 1:12-16.

So the path of safety is back to wisdom – *'My son, let them (wisdom and understanding) not depart from your eyes – keep sound wisdom and discretion; so they will be life to your soul and grace to your neck. Then you will walk safely in your way and your foot will not stumble.'* Proverbs 3:21-3

Ask and keep asking! You will receive.

Mistakes will be made

It is part of the human condition - mistakes will be made. We don't want to make mistakes but no one is immune.

Even the greatest of believers make mistakes. The Apostle Peter is recorded as making a mistake much later on than his well known denial of Jesus. Peter is in Antioch and there are visitors, Jews who came from James. Peter and the other Jews, for fear of the circumcision, withdrew from eating with the gentile believers. Paul denounced their hypocrisy. Galatians 2:11-21

In Peter's case it was his response to fear that caused his mistake. It would be helpful, if and when we err, to take note of what triggered our mistake - then we can pray for the Holy Spirit to change us in that area of life. With mistakes, own up, do not deny it. Seek forgiveness as appropriate - from the Lord of course, and from anyone affected, as led by the Spirit to do so. Denial would be another mistake!

We are all on the road to eventual perfection - the Holy Spirit working within. Developing humility is an essential ingredient for God sets Himself against the proud. We don't have anything to be proud of - anything done of our own volition is just filthy rags. Anything done in the Spirit is all glory to God. Recognising and owning up to mistakes is the way of humility.

Now the very good news. Every mistake, every sin is utterly and completely forgiven. The blood of Jesus is like a stretch cover - it covers everything for this is the working of His love for us. So no need for us to 'beat ourselves up' over our mistakes. Pray, confess, know you are totally forgiven, get up and carry on. Don't look back, rather look up!

'If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' 1 John 1:9 Clean slate, immediate full restoration.

More good news. There is the wonderful promise of God to cause all things to work together for good, to those who love God and are called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28 The Lord does not want us to make mistakes, but knows it will happen, and even from our mistakes He promises to bring out some good for us - most noticeably character refinement, increased humility and an increased awareness of righteousness and holiness.

So always look up. The Son who set you free loves you with an everlasting love, which is not diminished by your mistakes. Worship Him and love Him with all your heart and all your mind.

Working and living in the anointed place

Don't be put off by the difficult times ahead – *'know this is the last days perilous times will come.'* 2 Timothy 3:1 (Perilous is from the Greek 'chalepos' which has the meaning difficult, hard to bear, grievous.) But the Lord Jesus Christ has not changed and is not altered or threatened by difficult times – and by His Spirit He dwells in us and with us.

He has prepared good works for us and has given to each one gifts and abilities – we have talents. Jesus spoke a parable concerning talents recorded by Matthew 25:14-30 and called minas in Luke 19:11-27. In both accounts all the necessary provision was made by Jesus. You have all you need for what God has called you to do! The point in both accounts is that the servants were expected to use their abilities and the provision Jesus made to create increase. Jesus instruction being *'Do business till I come.'*

Life and work get tough - don't give up. For Jesus has made even more provision for us. When we are doing the works He has provided (Ephesians 2:10) there is His anointing to make even the impossible possible. I had a difficult pension case for a client – there was no way forward until Jesus gave specific technical instructions with a word of knowledge.

Even the top pensions experts did not know what Jesus had told me to do was possible - but it was and the case was successfully concluded.

We are invited to God's throne, the throne of grace to find help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16) so don't hold back - as the scripture says come boldly.

This is the practical working of faith - Jesus speaks, we hear and faith comes by hearing. When we apply His instruction the impossible becomes possible. This is what Jesus did - He did what He saw and heard His Father doing - that is our calling also.

In the difficult days now, and ahead, we will need to make living and working by hearing God speak the normal and natural way we live life and do business. This is the eternal purpose of God, *'to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers,'* (Ephesians 3:10) not the 'Babylonian' way of self reliance, greed, corruption and deceit prevalent in the world today. This is the calling and objective of ICCC from its beginning.

We are part of the increase of God's kingdom which will find its fulfilment when Jesus returns to rule from Jerusalem. Then the increase of His government and peace will know no end. (Isaiah 9:7)

Baking a cake

Friends are coming to tea tomorrow so I need to bake a cake.

3 eggs, 200g each of sugar, flour and margarine, add flavouring as desired. Mix together very well and bake at 180c for 18-20 minutes. Remove from the baking tins and allow to cool. Added sweetness – icing sugar mixed with water or fruit juice spread on the top.

Butter icing – butter mixed with icing sugar spread in the middle between the two halves. Add decoration on top. Excellent job – it looks good, smells good and tastes good.

It set me thinking about the Christian life. Three essential ingredients, as the eggs represent life so do - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Add faith, hope and love - the principal ingredients of the Christian life. Mix together very well in everything we do. For sweetness decorate with more love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. Excellent job - our life looks, good, smells good and tastes good to those around us.

Problem time – did my cake sink in the middle, was it properly cooked or did it burn. Did it taste good. Had I left out one or more ingredients or had I added something else that was alien to the recipe? Did I decide to skip the icing – leaving out the sweetness?

How is my life and business? Have I left out one or more ingredients? Do I experience the presence and anointing of God in my life and work? Do I have faith? Do I have hope? Do I love those I meet in life and business? Do I love my colleagues and customers – or have I added a little shady dealing? Have I lost sight of the fact that I am called to serve others?

The Christian life is challenging for many reasons, our own failings, the bad actions and attitudes of other people and the work of spiritual forces of wickedness against us. Circumstances will often test our Christian life.

Praise God – the master creator of all things is not just on our side but by the Holy Spirit dwells within us to continually, bit by bit, change us from one degree of glory to another – making us more and more like Jesus. Praise God we are invited to His throne of grace to find help in times of need. Praise God we have the wonderful hope of eternal life to complete the picture. Praise God, when we do slip up He is faithful and just to forgive us and to restore us to all righteousness.

Keep baking - practice makes perfect – similarly, over time, we will be perfected by Him who loves us and gave Himself for us.

Pressed and shaken

The beatitudes are one of the most famous parts of scripture and it is here that we find our quotation for today.

It starts with *'love your enemies,'* goes on to *'be merciful'* and then *'judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven.'* The concept of reaping that which you sow is firmly established.

Then we read *'Give and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use it will be measured back to you.'* (From Luke 6:35-38)

Consider that - in what we do - that is what we sow - in everyday life and business, we can choose to fit the above descriptions. Luke had already said, *'bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.'* (verse 28) It can be a difficult choice when you have just been cheated in a deal or verbally assaulted for no reason. But a choice it is!

When we make the right choice Jesus promise is blessing. And not just blessing, but generous blessing that is pressed down, shaken together and running over. Isaiah has it, *'a generous man devises generous things, and by generosity he shall stand.'* (32:8)

Here is a challenge - how can I design my business, my life, my actions to fulfil Jesus words and to demonstrate great generosity?

Jesus desire for us is expressed by Paul in Ephesians 3:20, *'Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.'*

There it is again - that concept of blessing pressed down, shaken together and poured out.

'But as it is written; Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.' (1 Corinthians 2:9) It seems there is much more to come than we have yet experienced. Jesus generosity is greater than we yet experience and appreciate. This is the great Christian hope - there is much more to come when we finally meet Him face to face in the place He has prepared for us.

In the meantime we can tap into more and more blessing as we choose the right manner of life, as we are more and more generous in every aspect of life.

Let's experience life like the Psalmist, *'You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies, You anoint my head with oil, my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.'*

Shaken not stirred

'Once more I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of all nations, and I will fill this temple with glory says the Lord of hosts.' Haggai speaks of the shaking of the tribulation and the glory to come when the Desire of all nations comes to rule. (chapter 2 verse 6) It is enhanced in Hebrews where the author adds shaking the heaven and the earth (like birth pangs) to bring forth Jesus kingdom which cannot be shaken. It is further explained in Matthew 24 .

Our point is that now we live in that period Jesus described as the beginning of sorrows (birth pains). Matthew 24:6-8. So we shouldn't be surprised when bad things happen. Of course, at the present, time the current pandemic fits into this picture. Our first reaction to any bad news can cause us to shake a bit - things like loss of family member, loss of job or business, unpleasant attack from someone else and so on.

However. When we are shaken it is time to dig deeper into our relationship with Jesus. He is always there and ready to bring comfort and peace in every situation and to bring wisdom to our actions. Our relationship with Jesus is solid as a rock - not to be stirred by events.

So first reaction when something goes wrong - call upon the Lord. Not like my friend who was driving down a steep hill in the wet - the car in front stopped but he didn't. Crash! His reaction, 'Lord what have you done to me now?' got an immediate spoken response from Heaven, 'I was not driving you were!'

The Lord God does not send bad events - James explains this clearly; *'Every good and perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is NO variation or shadow of turning.'* (chapter 1 verse 17)

Special things to note - good comes from the Father of lights - there is NO darkness. There is NO variation - He will not send good one day and bad the next! There is NO shadow of turning - there isn't even the slightest hint that He will change from His goodness.

At this time there are many voices saying all sorts of things claiming to be spiritual or prophetic. A lot has already been proved wrong. We are still in the age of grace. So when we see or hear things we need to be discerning. Does what I hear witness with my spirit (not my mind)? Does what I hear align with the goodness of God and with the scripture?

In all things we can seek the counsel of God Himself, who will surely help us in all our times of need.

I've been checking my insurance policy

Over 50 years ago I was offered this assurance policy. It offered me everlasting, eternal life - what's more that was guaranteed. More than that it was sealed within me - that is my spirit was born again and the Holy Spirit came in as a seal, a guarantee. (Ephesians 1:13) The policy also came with a full policy document (called The New Covenant) and an active help line (Hebrews 4:16). All I had to do was believe and give my life to Jesus.

Like all insurance policies one has to read the small print!

Did the policy guarantee success at work or in business? No.

Did the policy guarantee health and healing? No.

Did the policy guarantee protection from all evil? No.

Did the policy offer help in a time of need?

Yes.

Did the policy show me the way to reign in life?

Yes.

Did the policy give me authority and power over the works of evil? Yes

At the time the policy came with a free gift, a gift which is still with me today and for all time - the gift of righteousness.

That means being in right standing with God Himself, such that I can call Him Father and call on Him in a time of need.

As I ran my accountancy practice I came to experience the fact that He knew much more than I did about the technicalities and rules of accountancy; and He was willing to share His knowledge and wisdom – both when I asked for it and sometimes without my even asking.

He showed me that I was to actively take authority over the enemy who would seek to rob and destroy – even to kill if he could. This is not the same as me asking Him to deal with the enemy, – apparently He had already done that at Calvary, all I had to do was to enforce His victory on a week to week basis. He gave me the power, He wanted me to stand in His victory, to take authority, to show the enemy His manifold wisdom.

The small print in the covenant gave me excellent guidance – it told me to be generous and that same measure of generosity would be poured into my lap. Yes – it works!

It told me that by faith, that is by hearing what He had to say to me and believing it and acting on it, then nothing would be impossible for me. Yes – it works in health, in business , in life.

And the final promise, right now a place is being prepared for me by Jesus Himself. (John 14:1-3) What a wonderful policy – covenant.

Greetings and blessings to all fellow policyholders.

Got your driving licence?

Every born again, believer has a driving licence direct from heaven. This is what Jesus tells His followers – *‘Behold I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.’* Luke 10:19. Combine Jesus statement with Paul’s insight, *that the eternal purpose of the church is to demonstrate the wisdom of God to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places* (Ephesians 3:10-11), and to John’s insight that *‘He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world* (1 John 4:4),’ and we have our licence to drive out all the powers of evil that would seek to rob and to destroy and to kill.

How good a driver are you? Or are you just a sufferer? Our enemy is not idle – Peter warns us that, *‘he is like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.’* (1Peter 5:8)

By observation I see that many, many good brothers and sisters in the Lord suffer all sorts of loss because they think the loss has just come by natural causes – whether it be loss of health or loss of job or loss of business or whatever. Of course some losses are from natural causes and some from our own activity or decisions. Our enemy will often add his power to something that started from a natural cause, taking it to a worse level.

We are given the gift of discernment so that we can tell the difference. Sometimes God warns with a 'rhema' word. Often we don't know whether our loss or the attack we suffer is natural or spiritual - its time to ask! The Lord will give the required wisdom to those who ask. (James 1:5)

When we have understood that the problem has spiritual force behind it then our job is made easy - we know what to do! We have the driving licence from the Lord - drive out the evil spirit in the name of the Lord. *'Resist the devil, he will flee from you.'*

There is nothing to lose in demanding the enemy that he does not affect you, your family, your business whether you have discerned his work or not. I do this as a matter of course on a daily basis - telling satan he will not affect me, my family, my work every day - it is very effective.

Bear in mind that according to the parable of the persistent widow the unrighteous power doesn't necessarily give in straight away - persist keep driving, you will arrive at success. (Luke 18:1-8)

The theology of boats

What can we learn from the boats in the scriptures?

A safe place in the storm - is in the boat with Jesus!
The disciples did not feel safe as the storm raged and Jesus slept, but they were safe indeed. Circumstances - that is wind, waves and the boat taking on water, made them fearful because they didn't yet trust Jesus word. What do we learn? Don't rely on circumstances and feelings. Rather have faith - that is trust Him, He is trustworthy.

On another occasion the disciples have gone ahead in the boat. A storm arises. Then they see Jesus walking towards them on the water. They were afraid (again). When they recognised Jesus and welcomed Him into the boat they were immediately at their destination. What do we learn? Again don't give in to circumstances and feelings. And more - when Jesus is welcomed into the situation they were immediately at their destination, the right place.

What more do we learn? Jesus has power over every situation - He can quell all the storms that rage around us and around the marketplace, as they surely will. When Jesus is welcomed in we will arrive at our destination.

The apostle Peter was a brave man indeed. When he saw Jesus walking on the water he said to Him, *'Lord if it is you command me to come to You on the water. So He said "Come"'* Peter climbed out of the boat and started to walk on the water to Jesus. When he saw the wind and the waves he started to fear and called out, *'Lord save me.'* Immediately Jesus held out His hand and saved him. *'Why did you doubt'*

What do we learn? Firstly only step out of the boat when called by the Lord. Then when you do step out don't look at the problems which are sure to arise. Trust don't doubt. Call on the Lord He will answer.

What else can we learn from boats? If you are running away from the Lord you are likely to be thrown out of the boat – just like Jonah. Though of course the Lord was there to save him.

If your main objective is to get rich, to make money, then your faith is likely to be shipwrecked and you will pierce yourself with many troubles.

Boats tell us the safe place in life is to be in the boat with Jesus, fully trusting Him even in the storms of life. They tell us that He is fully trustworthy. They tell us it is safe to get out of the boat when Jesus calls, clearly not before! They also tell us that the apparent circumstances and our feelings are not the final answer - Jesus is.

Get a higher viewpoint

We are in this world but not of it. Our true and eternal home is in heaven. We are just passing through this sojourn on earth. So, it's best to get a higher viewpoint.

What does heaven have to say to me? What does heaven have to say in this or that situation? What does the Lord think about all that I do? Is the Lord pointing or calling me towards something or other?

On one occasion when teaching TWL in Africa a brother came up to me and said, 'you are like a giraffe.' Was this a compliment? He went on, 'you have your feet on the ground and your head in the heavens,' A great description of just how we should be in life.

In the heavenly realm is all truth and all we need to know - both practically and spiritually. How do I ?? - fill in your own question. By asking in prayer, even technical and practical things can be resolved. Instead of struggling with a problem - as we often do for hours, before we give up and pray. Why not pray first?

There are trials and problems in all aspects of life - Jesus warned that there would be tribulation in life. James urges us to count it all joy when we experience these difficulties. How can that be? It's not some sort of grit your teeth and smile! No, James knew that every trial was an opportunity for the Lord.

James said, if you lack wisdom, don't know the answer, don't know how to proceed - then ask of God, who will give liberally without reproach.

Don't doubt. God is the God of all hope - the happy expectation of good. Get the higher viewpoint.

This is the higher viewpoint - all we will ever need is fully known in the heavenly realm. God's kingdom has all the answers we will ever need.

James further advises - *'You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.'* 4:2-3 Ask and ask right.

'So I say ask and it will be given you, seek and you will find, and to him who knocks it will be opened.' Luke 11:9.. Jesus instruction and invitation - ask, ask, ask.

When we ask in prayer we are demonstrating that we know the Lord, that we know His goodness and kindness, and that we expect Him to respond. Indeed, James advises that we may need patience, but nevertheless our answer will come - be patient and have the happy expectation of good while we wait.

The happy expectation of good - from the unseen realm.

'Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.' Romans 15:13.

Vine's definition of hope (*elpis* in Greek) is our title this week. Our God is the God of hope by the power of the Spirit who indwells us. We have HOPE.

Our understanding of hope can only come from the scripture which records God's character and God's intention towards in the New Covenant. Here we find that: *'Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.'* Only good gifts.

Got a difficult situation - know that He is for you and not against you. Indeed, according to Paul, He will freely give us all things. Come to His throne of grace to obtain mercy and find the help you need. This is the nature of hope - the happy expectation of good.
(Romans 8:32 and Hebrews 4:17)

'We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.'
Romans 8:28

How can we enhance this happy expectation of good from the Lord? The best place to start is to be in love with Him – ‘love the Lord with all your heart’ is and has been the trumpet call of both old and new covenants. Now we have the advantage of being able to frequently ask the Holy Spirit for more and more love for Jesus. He answers!

Then get to know and understand the truth. Discern between the covenants as the way He manages His kingdom changes between covenants. We can frequently ask the Holy Spirit to fill us with more and more understanding of truth.

We are not the subject of God’s wrath which will come on the earth when sin’s cup is full. Rather we are delivered from the wrath to come. 1 Thessalonians 1:10. As born again believers we do not come into judgement – *‘Most assuredly I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life.’*
John 5:24

Rejoice my friends. The Lord Jesus Christ is the answer not the problem – for you, not against you, ready through grace to come to your aid. But our enemy seeks to rob and destroy, even kill. Resist him firm in your faith, take authority over his works - he will flee.

Wishing you the happy expectation of good.

Does God like chocolate?

Meet Messers Cadbury, Rowntree, Fry and Terry all born again, Spirit filled, bible believing, God honouring Christians. Each one was the founder of a very successful and significant chocolate manufacturing business in England.

They were all members of the Society of Friends founded in 1650 with the belief in and reliance on the light of Christ within. *'Christ in you the hope of glory.'* They had straight forward biblical beliefs which led them to be persecuted by the authorities.

As a Christian group they adopted and taught integrity, honesty, purity and truth in business dealings as one followed the light of Christ within. They were very successful in many industries and commerce: iron and steel, railways, banking (Lloyds and Barclays), brewing, shoes, clothing, chemicals, matches, food, tea, engineering and so on. The members of the Society of Friends contributed greatly to the transformation of Britain into a world leading industrial nation.

They ran their businesses for the glory of God and for the wider benefit. Their staff often received better pay and as well as in some cases housing – Bourneville being the best known example. They started schools for their children and the children of their workers. They gave medical and pastoral assistance.

Does God like chocolate? I don't know. But I do know He loves His children in all walks of business and commerce and life.

In the Old Testament we find God anointing those who were working on the building of the Tabernacle - Exodus 31 and 35. The Tabernacle was where the Lord was going to interact with mankind hence the artisans were filled with the Spirit and anointed in their tasks - nothing less than that would do.

How much more then, we whose bodies are now the Temple of the Holy Spirit, are anointed for what we do in life? Key points:

Stay in the calling you were in when you were saved. 1 Corinthians 7:20 then ..

Follow the light of Christ within you by hearing the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Work in all that you do for the glory of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 10:31.

As we do the works God has prepared beforehand for us to walk in His anointing will be there empowering us so that His glory can be seen. It is His purpose that His divine wisdom is demonstrated through His body of believers to those around and to the principalities and powers.

Does God like chocolate? I don't know. But I do know He loves you in your calling and will enable you to receive from Him abundantly more than you think or ask as you walk by faith with Him through all of life, especially business. Let's expect more of Him in us and with us.

20 20 with visions

20 20 vision is the phrase used to describe perfect or normal vision. When I visit the optician she gives me an eye test and glasses to bring my sight up to standard.

For the Christian vision is very important. In Proverbs 29:18 we find the statement, *'where there is no vision the people cast of restraint.'* For us, we can highlight vision at three levels:

First and foremost, the most important vision is this, Jesus will return to rule on earth. This is clearly borne out in scripture, for example when the disciples saw Jesus rise into heaven they were told, *'This same Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.'* (Acts 1:11)
Come Lord Jesus come.

Then there is that part or parts of the body to which we are called, be it a local church or fellowship or an organisation like ICCC. Here it is very important to receive the vision from the Lord. A vision statement developed and written by us may look good but unless it comes from above it will bear little fruit. In ICCC we have a very clear prophetic vision – come to the position where what you do in life, and work, is the outward manifestation of an inward walk of faith. A vision from the Lord that has the potential to be very fruitful.

Finally, we have our own personal vision, we would describe as our calling. That which the Lord has prepared beforehand (Ephesians 2:10), that is my and your calling. It is the place where we can expect to experience the outward manifestation of the inward walk of faith as we hear the Lord with specific guidance and instruction. Lets expect more!

Confidence is an important element in the working out of our calling and vision. My own experience fulfilled the scripture, *'Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called.'* For me, over 50 years in accountancy provided very well for my family with plenty over for generosity; saw a number of clients come to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ as their saviour; saw some healed; saw words of knowledge bring professional understanding not learnt and saw miraculous provision. I never doubted that I was called to be an accountant.

James warns that doubting will lead to fruitlessness.
(James 1:6-7)

Getting our spiritual vision clear is more important than good natural vision.

So my brethren be confident reminding yourselves that the Lord will return, possibly quite soon. I pray He will find us doing His bidding and thus be able to address us as good and faithful, doing business until He comes.
(Luke 19:13)

Other titles

The ICCC – Transformed Working Life series:

Inherent Power

Work is a 1st class calling

No one can serve two masters

Hope - the certainty of future blessing

Faith or presumption

Hearing God speak

Working from rest

Renewing the mind

Be strong in the battle

Anointing

Fruitfulness

Other booklets written for ICCC

Powered by grace

Works of power - now is the time

Stand tall - take your position

Transformed Working Life - quick view

Other publications

Will the church be caught away?

Explaining the future.

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So that's what it's all about (overview of the bible account)

*Daniel (introductory level)

*Revelation (introductory level)

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Israel and the church not in competition

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Last Orders
Wisdom
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